

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Cedar City High School
703 West 600 South
Cedar City, Utah 84720**

February 9-10, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Cedar City High School
703 West 600 South
Cedar City, UT 84720**

February 9-10, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, February 9-10, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Cedar City High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Kevin Garrett is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Cedar City High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Cedar City High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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CEDAR CITY HIGH SCHOOL
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School Administration

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Rusty Taylor..... Assistant Principal
Todd Peacock.....Activities Director

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Kim Blackner Counselor
Mindy Jones..... Counselor
Verl Prestwich..... Counselor

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Michelle Taylor
June Thorley

Todd Thorley
Grace Vlasich
Scott Wallace
Cleaver Weaver
Tami Weaver
Jill Yardley

CEDAR CITY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Cedar City High is dedicated to cultivating responsible citizens through lifelong learning and community involvement.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe that respect for self, others and property enhances learning.
- We believe an effective educational system provides enjoyment and success for all students.
- We believe society prospers with competent, productive, educated and caring citizens.
- We believe in maintaining close partnership among community, home and school.
- We believe every student is entitled to a safe, compassionate learning environment.
- We believe accountability and integrity are important in life.
- We believe in the integration of technology in learning.
- We believe all students can learn, but by different means, and at different rates.
- We believe achievement will be respected, recognized, rewarded and celebrated.
- We believe gaining knowledge and reasoning skills is essential.
- We believe every student can make a meaningful contribution.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steve Hirase, Murray School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Ann F. Anderson, Springville High School, Nebo School District

Tim Lowe, Dixie High School, Washington County School District

Terri Lusk, Dixie Middle School, Washington County School District

John Penrod, Payson High School, Nebo School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CEDAR CITY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Cedar City High School is located in a city of approximately 25,000 citizens. It is located close to Southern Utah University, which is the major employer in the community. Many Cedar City High students attend SUU, both in concurrent enrollment courses and after graduating from high school.

Due to constant change, the school has faced many challenges. In 1980, the school changed from a grade 10-12 school to a grade 9-12 school. As the population grew, the size of the building had to be enlarged to accommodate the new students. In 1997, Iron County School District opened a new high school, which dropped the enrollment of Cedar City High from approximately 1,600 students to 900 students.

The school improvement team was created in August of 2003 by Mr. Garrett. The seven-member team consisted of administrators, a counselor, and teachers representing different disciplines. The team attended an accreditation training sponsored by the Utah State Office of Education later that fall. The members of the leadership team have been responsible for conducting each of the major components of the self-study process, including revision/development of mission statement and shared beliefs, development of desired results for student learning (DRSLs), departmental analysis, focus group analysis, and development of the school's action plan.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

- The Cedar City High School leadership team mentioned that, despite the efforts the school makes to communicate with parents, the self-study indicates that parents perceive a lack of communication with the school.
- Although departments have a high degree of collaboration among department members, collaboration between departments does not occur very frequently.

In general, the student achievement data and school profile indicated several areas for study and action by the school staff and School Community Council. The analysis of the available data by staff, administrators, and members of the School Community Council demonstrates a strong commitment to identifying areas of growth on behalf of students and staff.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Cedar City High School has provided a significant amount of data regarding the achievement of its students. However, the school should make efforts to disaggregate the test results by gender, low-income population, ethnicity, limited English proficiency, special education status, etc. This will provide the school with a more accurate view of which students are learning—but more importantly, which students are struggling.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The school should disaggregate assessment data by gender, ethnicity, low-income population, limited English proficiency, special education status, etc., to determine the achievement of students.
- The school should investigate multiple forms of assessments that departments can utilize to determine the achievement of students.
- The school should determine how it will assess whether students have achieved the school's DRSLs when they exit the school.
- The school should attempt to include parents and students on the school improvement team to provide their perspectives in the school improvement process.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Interviews with parents, staff members, and students made it clear that the school community was invited to participate in the accreditation process. The learning community has been actively involved with the process for the past two school years, with the self-study being the major focus of faculty meetings and staff development days.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts in the production of the self-study. The Visiting Team believes the report provides an accurate picture of the school and that the staff members gained insights they would not have had if

they were not involved with the accreditation process. The action plan is aligned with the findings of the self-study.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Cedar City High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

Problem Solving

Students must be prepared to analyze and respond to unexpected and difficult circumstances in and out of the classroom.

Indicators:

- Builds new knowledge through problem solving.
- Uses a variety of problem-solving strategies.
- Demonstrates the process of reasoning and problem solving.

Effective Communication

Students must be able to understand, assess, and articulate their own views in a wide variety of forums and through diverse technology.

Indicators:

- Demonstrates mastery of writing standards in all content areas.
- Demonstrates skills needed to communicate effectively using technology.
- Demonstrates proficiency in reading purposefully, actively, and critically.
- Demonstrates purposeful and active listening in a variety of settings.

Making Connections

Students will be able to view personal, vocational, and civic issues in broad perspective that acknowledges the insight of diverse disciplines and world views.

Indicators:

- Demonstrates how interdisciplinary ideas can connect and build on one another.
- Understands the significance and impact of learning and citizenship on present and future.
- Understands the rights and responsibilities of a community-centered citizen

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

A collaborative effort to build a shared vision for the school has been inclusive of all vested groups of the school community. The administration formed a committee of faculty, staff members, students, and parents. A major concern for the committee was the length of the old mission statement and its lack of direction for the school. In reading the current mission statement, it is evident that the goal of developing one that is clear and concise was achieved. The Visiting Team found the statement to be widely accepted by all stakeholders. Students were very familiar with the mission statement, and they indicated the statement had meaning for them personally. The mission statement is posted in every room and a large sign is hanging in the entrance of the school. The Visiting Team feels the mission statement will give the school a unified sense of direction for the future.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Cedar City High School should be commended for developing statements that are clearly student-centered. They are a cornerstone of the mission statement and central to the beliefs that the administration and teachers support. The Visiting Team noted that these beliefs were posted in all rooms and that teachers felt that the beliefs had meaning for them in their work.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

Iron County School District has incorporated the use of "Power Standards" in the district. Cedar City High School has chosen three of those standards to be used as the school's DRSLs. There is a connection between the newly developed mission and belief statements and the school's desired results for student learning. The teachers are developing connections through their curricula so that the mission of the school is achieved. The DRSLs were not posted anywhere in the classrooms.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

By meeting with department heads, focus group leaders, teachers, and administrators, as well as making classroom visits, the Visiting Team determined

that the staff has been collaboratively working together to ensure that the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum. It is evident that CRTs, end-of-level tests, and other evaluative data are also being used in the collaborative process to ensure that students' needs are being met.

Iron County School District has developed Power Standards that are similar to the Utah Life Skills. Cedar City High School developed its DRSLs utilizing the district's Power Standards. Neither the administration nor staff was aware of the Utah Life Skills.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Through observations and discussions with the teaching staff, department heads, and administration, it is evident that everyone is working collaboratively to ensure that the curriculum focuses on the school's desired results for student learning. Visiting with the English, Math and Foreign Language Departments provided evidence of both the teaching staff's understanding of the DRSLs and their incorporation of the DRSLs into their curricula.

It is evident that the staff has come a long way in collaboratively working as a team in the past two years. This is a real strength for both the staff and the administration. The addition of a faculty room would provide a common meeting place for collaboration to take place.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The professional staff was observed using a wide variety of learning experiences to actively engage students. Types of instructional activities used included direct instruction, classroom discussions, independent student exploration, collaborative exploration, laboratory activities, use of technology, peer tutoring, internships, self-paced modules, cooperative learning, role plays, multimedia, hands-on activities, and problem-based inquiry. The staff demonstrated a variety of strategies to enhance student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The professional staff was observed using a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Curriculum plans showed the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, resources, and assessments of student

learning that were included in developing instruction to ensure the needs of different learners were met. Teachers were aware of students who needed interventions to help them learn.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Teachers have access to quality professional development programs that enable them to implement the curriculum and facilitate learning. Students are involved with EDNET courses, concurrent enrollment programs, student internships, athletic programs, academic programs, clubs, and other events that support their learning.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Visiting Team observed evidence that the administration and staff are aware of the DRSLs and adhere to them when assessing the students. Each teacher has an improvement plan that he or she uses to assess his or her classroom instruction. At the end of each school year, the teachers have a chance to reflect upon their expectations for student achievement. Cedar City High School's mission and belief statements are posted in each classroom.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Each department at Cedar City High School has spent time analyzing itself based on the Essential Questions for Departmental Analysis of Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness. The Visiting Team met with each teacher and then each department. The teachers stated that the departmental analyzing process was very enlightening, both in areas of strength and weakness. The Visiting Team was able to observe many different types of methods of assessment during the classroom visits. Some departments used authentic types of assessments (i.e., performance projects, open-ended questions, group presentations, journal writing, and effective use of rubrics). Some departments were only using test/quiz-type assessments. Some departments were aware that this is one area in which they could improve, using authentic assessment beyond tests and quizzes.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Cedar City High School staff is dedicated to creating a fair and equitable manner of assessment. As the staff members further refine and implement their

improvement plan and DRSLs, they will align appropriate assessment instruments to those standards.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school's leadership promotes quality instruction by supporting teachers' efforts to create new courses as needed or desired. The leadership, by allowing teachers to attend workshops and by providing professional development opportunities, supports the academic learning climate. The school provides concurrent enrollment classes as well as AP courses for students. Individualized remediation is provided for students who need additional help in most courses.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The school's leadership team reviews data generated by the UBSCT, ACT, core, and other standardized tests to make effective decisions at the school. The principal and department heads meet as needed to review the need for new course offerings. Individual teachers use classroom assessment to make instructional decisions. The school is in the process of implementing a program of collaboration between departments and throughout the school.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The leadership monitors progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness by reviewing the teachers' profile of coursework. Individual teachers monitor their students' work. Teachers' instructional effectiveness is further monitored by peer evaluation, administrative observation, and personal evaluation.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Additional leadership efforts are currently being used to ensure that the organization, operations, and resources of the school are dedicated to achieving a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. New or improved policies that relate to this effort include the dress code, attendance, and cell phone policies, and financial reporting.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The majority of the school leadership's decision-making efforts are expended to ensure that the allocation and use of resources are aligned with the school goals, including the DRSLs, and other school improvement efforts.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school conducts departmental meetings and cross-curriculum collaborative efforts to empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning. The administration also provides teachers with the opportunity to attend workshops and district training as needed. The Writing Across the Curriculum program has been developed to encourage the above-mentioned efforts.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Cedar City High School has built a positive relationship between staff and faculty members within the school. The results of a school-wide survey showed that there is a positive working relationship among teachers, staff members, and administrators. The accreditation team also found this to be true. Teachers expressed positive feelings toward their school and the administration. Departmental meetings are held on a regular basis. Each department meets with another department once a month to collaborate. At department meetings the DRSLs and ways to implement them are discussed.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Cedar City High School has established many collaborative networks improving opportunities for student learning. Teachers are involved in the SEOP process. Many departments have set up collaboration networks with SUU. Cedar City High has a very successful tutoring program with SUU. College students also come to Cedar City High to teach mini-lessons and mentor students. Cedar City High has many clubs and extracurricular activities for the students; GYC, career fair, job shadowing, Governor/Mayor's Youth Council, EDNET, Concurrent Enrollment, Senior College Day, and other activities were evidence that Cedar City High has a strong network of collaboration with the community.

Cedar City High has put a high priority on reaching out to the community. The school is making an effort to improve some programs and adding others. They have had success with seven years of parent surveys. Ninety percent of parents surveyed felt that they were welcome at Cedar City High School. One of Cedar High's DRSLs is "Effective Communication." There is plenty of evidence that the administration and faculty are striving to have open communication with the community. Some of the programs that Cedar City High School implemented to monitor and achieve this goal include parent surveys, SEOPs, PTA and counseling newsletters, Power School, a calling service, IEPs, Good News postcards, the Booster Club, award assemblies, and the local newspaper.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The staff of Cedar City High School is committed to providing students with the opportunities necessary to achieve their potential. To this end, staff members are actively engaged in professional development to strengthen their skills. The school administration supports staff members in their professional growth by providing strong professional development within the school and giving teachers the resources to take advantage of opportunities outside of the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school administrators recognize collaboration among staff members as an important component in the creation of conditions necessary to support productive change and continuous improvement. They are also aware of the physical constraints the physical plant creates in meeting this goal. Therefore, the school administration has made a concerted effort to provide activities and opportunities for all staff members to interact and collaborate with each other.

The Visiting Team commends the commitment made by the school administration and staff to engage as a community of learners. The Visiting Team recommends that the school administration continue to find and create opportunities for collaboration between departments.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Cedar City High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Cedar City High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Cedar City High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

Upon review of the school profile and completion of the site visit, including interviews with all of the critical stakeholders, the Visiting Team is confident that the school-wide action plan adequately addresses the critical areas for follow-up. The school profile, department reports, and focus groups provided the school with accurate information for areas of growth, and the accreditation leadership team and school staff have written a reasonable action plan to address these areas. The

Visiting Team believes that the strong leadership provided by the school principal will also contribute to the school's success in implementing the plan.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school provide more specific time lines and actions to assist in the implementation of the action plan.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The school leadership team has done an effective job including all stakeholders in the accreditation process. The Visiting Team had many opportunities to meet with school administration, teachers, counselors, students, and parents. The school community was open to suggestions and committed to refining the action plan to address the recommendations made by the Visiting Team. The Visiting Team is confident that the school leadership will implement the school's action plan and the recommendations of the team.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team is confident that the school leadership is committed to the continuous improvement process and understands that decisions need to be based on data. As the members of the school leadership team refine and better define the DRSLs and action plans, they understand the importance of making modifications based on an ongoing analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The school instructional staff is to be commended on its high level of professionalism. It was evident to the Visiting Team that the professional staff members care about the students and are willing to sacrifice their time and effort to provide opportunities for students.
- The Visiting Team commends the strong leadership provided by the school administration. The school administration is respected by school staff members, parents, and students. The administration has embraced the accreditation process, which has served to bring the school staff together.

- The Visiting Team commends the efforts of the school's support staff. The support staff has pride in its work and contributes to the positive climate of the school.
- Most of all, the Visiting Team commends the students at Cedar City High School. It was apparent that students have a genuine interest in each other. The students who had been involved in the accreditation process took their involvement seriously and contributed to the development of the school improvement plan.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school leadership team provide more detail and specificity in the action plans (completion dates, etc.). The action plans need to be more specifically aligned to address the findings of the study groups and the school-wide DRSLs.
- The Visiting Team recommends that DRSLs be clarified so they are in observable, measurable terms. A process for assessing students to determine whether they are leaving Cedar City High School having achieved the desired results for student learning must be developed. The school should consider using its departmental collaboration efforts to complete this task.
- The Visiting Team recommends that a concerted effort be prepared to make students and parents aware and of the school's DRSLs.